

I. G. W. WOW



INTERNMENT CAMP · MEDICINE HAT · ALBERTA

VOL. 2, No. 7.

Published under authority of Col. T. E. Snow, D.O.C., M.D. 13.
The contents of this publication have been edited and approved by H/Capt. E. Geo. Pearce.

JAN. 19, 1946.

Mass Escape Almost

An escape that rivalled, in some respects, the best work of our own boys in European camps is recorded here from the notes made by three or four of the Guards, Officers and NCO's, who are now in Medicine Hat, holding appointments at camp H.Q.

The locale was an Ontario Internment Camp, and the time of the year was April. This particular camp was in a scrub bush section, with a ravine on three sides and muskeg on the fourth. In those days the inside guard work was in the hands of the Provost Corps while the Vets manned the towers; there was possibly, as a result, less co-ordination than was desirable. The structure of the buildings had not been designed to make checking of possible tunnels easy—and everything was in favor of the PW's efforts to make a getaway.

SUSPICION AROUSED

On this evening, about 2300 hours, there was a fresh-air fiend on guard in one of the towers—not the tower nearest the escape point. This guard had the win-

dow on the lee side wide open and he heard a faint noise from out there in the darkness away from the camp's glare. The noise was repeated and the guard flashed his light but saw no movement. When the noise came again, the corporal of the guard was on the scene and joined in the search of the suspected area. A wash basin was discovered and a bundle of underwear. Careful examination revealed that spruce tree branches had been cunningly arranged so that they covered the entrance to a tunnel emerging on the side of the slope. A message reporting the propable escape was sent but through some misinterpretation there was a delay of ninety minutes before the alarm was sounded. Meanwhile, the guards had investigated further and found a number of PW's in the tunnel, thoroughly soaked, for the water level was rising rapidly. Apart from this defect in the drainage system the tunnel was well equipped. Empty milk-tins formed an air-conditioning system

(Continued on page 3)



Windlass trolley and rails used by German PW's in their ingenious plan to escape. The above picture shows them after being brought to the surface by Canadian guards.

"MONTEITH"

FOURTH IN A SERIES OF STORIES ON INTERNMENT CAMPS

The birth of Monteith as an Internment Camp was really not a birth but a metamorphosis. Before she received the first PW's she had been the pet political football of Northern Ontario. She had run the gamut from jail farm to boys' school to experimental farm. There were fine buildings, expansive lawns, beautiful shrubs.

CIVILIAN INTERNEES

In July 1940 the first train-load of internees arrived, met at the station by members of H.Q. staff, clad in a mixture of khaki and civvies and in a state of bewilderment. They were Veterans of the First World War and had been posted without any advance notice, having no idea as to the type of their future duties. They were there, however, and intended to make the best of things. Some wire had been put up; within, tents had been erected—bell tents without floorboards. The summer was very cold and very wet. The civilian internees who were the first occupants looked upon their shelter with great misgiving. It was thus that Monteith started its career as an Internment Camp.

NEW ENCLOSURE

As time went on a proper enclosure was built with housing facilities for 1,800 prisoners of war. Barracks were put up for the troops and gradually the camp began to look like a military establishment. Growing pains manifested themselves in PW movements. The internees left and were replaced by German merchant seamen. These were replaced by captured combatant troops—all Nazis and extremely cocky and arrogant.

At this stage the camp settled down to a sort of routine, disturbed only by escapees, a near riot, the regular change of Guard Companies, and the burning of the little house behind the church in the village. Life in the frozen North was pretty dull. The camp, however, flourished as somewhere someone kept hav-

ing great visions. The visions were translated into fact and the contractors, assisted by sappers, moved in and commenced work on a second enclosure, bigger and better than the first. True to the rule of the game, not a spade was turned until there was a foot of frost in the ground. The new enclosure, as time went by, rose magnificently, a joy to behold. Double-decker huts with all facilities, a hundred-bed hospital, laundry, dining hall, dental clinic, recreation hall, and other smaller huts for sundry purposes. As an addition to the Canadian side, there arose a hundred-bed hospital complete with fully-equipped operating room, X-ray equipment, large dental clinic, nurses' residence, new quartermaster store, and curling rink.

The camp was now equipped to accommodate about 4,500 PW's. The number of PW's actually housed there never exceeded 3,700 and that was only for four months when they had the combatant PW's in one enclosure and merchant seamen in the other. March 1944 the combatants were moved, leaving only the seamen.

Since then there have been no changes and it is expected that soon the only thing left of the internment camp Monteith will be a number of anecdotes flavored with a certain brand of nostalgia.

A lot of people are like cafeterias. They believe in "self-service" only.

An old lady kept a parrot that was always swearing. She put up with this but on Sunday she kept a cover over the cage—removing it on Monday morning. One Monday afternoon, she saw the minister coming toward the house, so she again placed the cover over the cage. As the reverend gentleman was about to step into the parlor, the parrot remarked, "Damn short week."

P.O.W. WOW

"The little paper with readers from Halifax to Victoria"
(Published every second week at Medicine Hat.)

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor..... H/Capt. E. Geo. Pearce
Associate Editors
Capt. J. Biart, Capt. T. Rodie
Secretary .. S/Sgt. R. Burkholder

Sub-editors:
36 Coy. V.G.C. Cpl. B. R. Wright
Headquarters Lt. A. G. Bruyns
R.C.A.M.C. Cpl. L. G. Barrett

Over a recent broadcast from C.B.C. Toronto by Greg Clarke, it was stated that the approximate cost of training one private from the time he was enlisted until he was ready for combat was seven thousand dollars. At the same time, it was stated that it took twenty-five thousand dollars to train a fighter pilot. Greg Clarke said in his broadcast that these figures had been quoted in Hansard and were considered to be as closely correct as was possible to get them. His estimate was, of course, apropos of the cost of running the war.

Now usually when astronomical figures are being quoted on the radio their repetition induces slumber. But this time we sat up with a start; we hadn't thought we were so expensive, and then the impossible occurred—two thoughts entered our mind simultaneously. One was, what must Sergeant Majors cost, and the other, who is getting all the money we saved the Government (and here the "we" means the Veterans Guard of Canada). For did it ever occur to you that we didn't have to be trained? We had gone through finishing school in the previous war and all the government had to do was throw us a suit of battle dress, and a pair of boots, and give us the tools. We knew how to use them.

Just then the office cat woke up and we went into a huddle with a piece of paper and pencil, and the cat. The cat did the figuring and we wrote down the answers. There were approximately fifteen thousand members of the Veterans Guard of Canada on active service in 1943-1944. Multiply this by seven thousand and the answer is **one hundred and five million dollars**. That is what it would have cost the government to train fifteen thousand new soldiers to do the job we did, and are still doing. So, we saved the Government one hundred and five million dollars. 'Oh yeah?' said the cat. "Just the cost of one day's war to Canada."

"Just the cost of a pension at sixty dollars a month for ten years, to fifteen thousand Vets," said we. Now, we and the cat are not on speaking terms. For the funny thing about figures is, they can mean so many different things. That's why we leave the figuring to the office cat, and

STAND EASY!

Just as the least crumb of information about the personal lives of movie stars and radio crooners is eagerly hunted, so—no doubt—there is a vast horde of P.O.W. WOW readers who would give their false teeth to get an intimate glimpse into the non-public activities of those great figures who write and publish this magazine. A hint or two will suffice.

* * *

As usual, the columns containing lofty sentiments and adjurations directed to raising our moral standards are NOT written by the Padre. The Padre does the prize-fights and covers the area usually handled by the Police Gazette. He plays hockey and we keep on going to the games, hoping that we will be able to study his reactions when somebody clouts him a good one. He is the business manager also and rustles the ads with a mixed air of nonchalance and belligerent piety or pious belligerency that brings home the bacon. We do not belong to his particular persuasion and our efforts—based on our early Presbyterian training—to entice him into theological discussions on the finer points of dogma, have utterly failed. In an era of gripes, rumors and disillusion we have yet to hear of someone who doesn't think our Padre is the tops.

* * *

As in our own case, another of our writers usually succeeds in bringing emphasis to bear on the note of uplift. B—, as we shall call him, has fine command of language, a gift for humorous allusion and a flair for the historical narrative. At times one has the impression that he must have studied for the bar—for he frequently attains that goal. In his own niche of internment work he is as conscientious, skilled and thorough as are the standards he would set for others. We have two regular contributors with the initial "B" and the foregoing tribute is at the service of which ever one feels he is being described.

Mr. Ilsley. Yet they say "money saved is money earned," and who saved it? "Oh! shut up!"

R.S.M. Dies of Heart Attack

It is with sincere regret that we record the sudden death of our Camp Sergeant Major, John Wesley Reinhart (W.O.1), which occurred at Colonel Belcher Military Hospital on 22nd December, 1945. The sudden passing of such a well known personality came as a great shock to the Camp and cast a shadow over the Christmas festivities.



R.S.M. REINHART

R.S.M. Reinhart had been Camp Sergeant Major since the start of this camp, having been posted from Farnham Internment Camp where he held the appointment of Camp Sergeant Major. Prior to that he was Company Sergeant Major of No. 3 Company, V.G. of C., having served with them since his enlistment 17 June 40.

Born in Kitchener, Ontario (1892), he served overseas in the First Great War with the 147th Bn. C.E.F. His home was in Owen Sound, Ontario, where he had his own business, a broom manufacturer, and he was buried

The writer of this column secured the appointment because the Padre held to the good old maxim, "If you want someone to do the best job possible, enlist the busiest man you know." Our work is continuous, knows no limits of hours or energy and is entirely dissociated from the type of life led by the above mentioned writers. At short notice, and usually just before the printer goes into his act where he foams at the mouth, we take a few minutes off and write this column and re-write or assemble some other material. Some have wondered if the sacrifice we make is worth it.

The Fourth Column

Editor, P.O.W. WOW:

Your paper ain't a bad "rag" for a camp like Medicine Hat, but why don't you get more punch in it. All these stories about escapes and Ozada and old stuff like that give me a pain in the neck. What we want is more personal interest stories. There must be lots of fellows back from the war with interesting stories to tell. Why don't your staff of high-paid editors go out and get them instead of sitting on their fannies reading the dictionary? The fellow who writes "Stand Easy" ain't bad, but his jokes are. Your sports page is like our hockey team—ain't enough zip to it. And what happened to your cartoonist—well, he had it coming to him, I guess. Why don't you start a competition for your favorite pin-up girl and give us some pictures of some snappy dames?

Yours for a better paper.

DISGRUNTLED.

there with military honors.

A man of considerable personality combined with strength of character, he carried out his duties as Camp Sergeant Major in an exemplary manner. He was firm, kindly and courteous, and the friend of anyone in trouble. He was never too busy to listen to a tale of woe from an "Old Sweat" or "Young Soldier," and his aim was to have an efficient but happy camp. He leaves a host of friends to mourn his passing and his place will be hard to fill.

Terminal Cafe

Medicine Hat, Alta.

GEO. FISHER, Mgr.

Best of Luck from

**H. R.
Hutchings**



Sporting and
Leather Goods

HALF-TIME

With Archie

Well, luckless Lions finally put one away. A good game, too. Judging from reports last Tuesday's fixture against the Saskatchewan sextet was one that met with the approval of fans—which reminds me, our hockey team has a real obligation to the two hundred or so boys who make it a point to watch them in action. And there's usually a pretty good sprinkling of officers. Note to ranks other than "other ranks": How to be popular: cheer longer and louder when your boys score.

One thing we could use most of all: more organized plays and less hit-and-miss (we are not referring to the M.O., the Bruiser's tactics). . . . Looks like the hockey team will journey into Saskatchewan this weekend to play against Maple Creek and Gull Lake. . . . We'll be back to tell you all about it.

Bye, bye.

REVOLVER CLUB DEFEATS 132 INTERNMENT CAMP; SHOOT ON 'HAT RANGE

132 Internment Camp Rifle Club was defeated by Medicine Hat Rifle and Revolver Club on Friday, January 11, by a score of 1382 to 1367. Headed by Dave Whetstone, the winner of the Manitoba Small Bore Championship, the civilian team had no difficulty in outshooting the army group. Cpl. Barrett, RC-AMC, and Pte. Kilpatrick of 36 Coy turned in the best targets for 132 Rifle Club. Below are the comparative scores:

Medicine Hat	
Dave Whetstone	100 (5x)
W. R. Robertson	100 (7x)
L. Johnson	100 (7x)
Mrs. E. Garrett	99 (3x)
Dick Keal	100 (7x)
L. Garrett	98 (1x)
P. Bray	99 (2x)
A. C. Wade	100 (1x)
Mrs. Bray	100 (5x)
Mrs. T. Lucks	100 (5x)
C. J. Vaughan	99 (4x)
B. Keal	100 (8x)
Miss D. Darling	89 (1x)
W. H. Hole	98 (4x)

Internment Camp	
Major Harrison	97 (2x)
Capt. Pearce	98 (3x)
Cpl. Barrett	100 (8x)
Pte. Ross	97 (3x)
Lt. McQuarrie	95 (2x)
Capt. Edmunds	99 (3x)
Cpl. Gerard	97 (3x)
Pte. Kilpatrick	100 (4x)
Pte. Watson	98 (3x)
Pte. Grubb	96 (2x)
Pte. Carstairs	93 (1x)
Pte. Holm	97 (1x)
R. Johnson	100 (2x)
E. Wright	100 (4x)

Lions Edge Maple Creek

Internment Camp Lions showed their best form to date last Tuesday night at the Arena when they defeated Maple Creek Army by a score of 5-4. Playing before some 300 fans, most of them soldiers, both teams supplied plenty of thrills in a contest that was nip and tuck all the way.

Maple Creek took an early lead after one minute's play when Hyde scored. Fifteen minutes later Sloboda flipped home Gibson's pass to tie the score. Maple Creek never regained the lead. With only a minute to play in the first session, Gibson put Lions ahead 2-1. The second period saw Gibson score for Lions while Flaa repeated for Maple Creek. Both teams scored twice in the last frame to make the final score 5-4.

Both goal-enders played steady hockey, while their team-mates made it interesting with heavy body checks, good individual efforts, but no attempt at organized rushes.

Suffield Trims Lions

It was a well-beaten team from the Internment Camp that took to the showers two and a half weeks ago. Making the best use of their weight, Suffield Army tucked away a 11-2 victory over Internment Camp Lions at the Arena on Tuesday night, 8 Jan. Porter, speedy winger, was the mainstay of the outplayed Lions.

LEADING LIONS

(Compilation of hockey scorers)

	Goals	Assits	Pts.
Porter	4	0	4
Trubyk	2	2	4
Pearce	2	1	3
Gibson V.	2	1	3
Sloboda	2		

Judge: "Are you sure this man was drunk?"

Cop: "Well, he was carrying a manhole cover and said he was taking it home to play on his victrola."

Wainwright Has Strong Team

Winning all but one game against local competition, the Internment Camp at Wainwright boasts of a hockey team hard to beat. Coached by L/Cpl. Harvey Benson, well-known in hockey circles, Wainwright was defeated by the Irma hockey club. In a match against the perennial champions of Eastern Alberta, Vermilion, the Internment Camp battled to a 2-2 draw. The team is known as Knopads—due to a shortage in equipment.

One of Wainwright's star players, Gord Fazchow, recently became the property of Winnipeg Monarchs. Some time ago when Monarchs defeated Winnipeg Orioles 8-4, Gord scored four of the eight Monarch markers. The Wainwright lineup includes such players as "Curly" Favero, "Cuddles" Borozynski, Hanson, Pelletier, and "Blitzkrieg" Brown.

Curling Notes

Four rinks composed of camp personnel are not having a bad time of it in local competition. Playing against rinks of the Medicine Hat Curling Club, these men, skipped by Lt. McQuarrie, L/Cpl. MacGregor, Sgt. Maj. Ward and Pte. Sledd, have won eight games while losing six.

Compliments of MARSHALL'S BOOK STORE

621 Second Street
Medicine Hat, Alta.
Phone 3633

Compliments of CRYSTAL DAIRY LIMITED

MASS ESCAPE—ALMOST

(Continued from page 1)

for the benefit of the tunnel gang. A windlass, trolley and rails helped in the transport of the soil. As the escaping PW's emerged they discarded their wet clothing and changed into other garments which they carried in a pail.

28 ESCAPE

A check-up showed that 28 had gotten away. Of this number, 11 were recaptured before 24 hours had elapsed. Two of them managed to reach Medicine Hat before being removed from the C.P.R. freight on which they rode.

For others the affair ended tragically, two being killed and several wounded when they failed to respond to a repeated warning to surrender. This group was encountered when it returned to a cache which had been loaded previously with supplies. The PW's ignored the demands of the armed Algonquin Regiment posse whom they greatly outnumbered and the order for "rapid fire" was given and carried out.

Investigation suggested that the escape had been planned for Hitler's birthday celebration as a mass escape in which the entire camp was to be seized by the PW's who had armed themselves with knives, razor keen and pointed. Compasses had been made out of razor blades. Pepper shakers were in the equipment to discourage the trail-finding dogs.

Stores of supplies had been cached beyond the point of exit and rucksacks had been filled for easy carrying of the food, etc. Weather conditions and fear of discovery caused a change of plans and date.

Eye-witnesses of the scene tell that the first real shock to the contemptuous arrogance of PW personnel came when, after the shooting, the commandant ordered the camp leader to provide a party of stretcher bearers. Not knowing what had happened, the party went out, quite prepared to assist in carrying wounded guards. When they discovered that it was their own dead and wounded whom they were to carry and that even though Hitler was winning the war, Canadians were not afraid to back up their commands with gunfire—dismay took over and arrogance entered upon an age of decline in that section of the internment world.

"Why do they always cut the cards for partners?"

"Because no player wants anybody to think he actually chose the dub he has to play with."

Just Another Escape Story

A special meeting was to be held in the camp leader's office. Guards were set out to see that the Tommies would not surprise them; even the other PW's must not know anything about this. At this meeting the groundwork was laid for a mass break to be made for two reasons: it would bolster the morale of the camp and annoy the Tommies; moreover possible future recognition on returning to Germany.

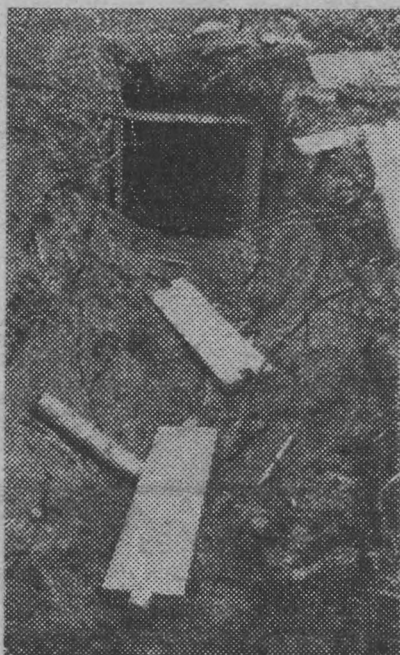
To effect a successful break would be very difficult as the Canadians were very much on the alert and had learned a lot of tricks. However, it was decided to dig a tunnel from a hut near the wire to the guard room on the other side of the wire. The tunnel would open under the guard room which was raised two feet above the ground, giving the escapees a chance to crawl out through an opening at the far side of the building and make their way down the road. The camp band was ordered to play military marches to drown out the sound of the carpenters who were erecting a false partition under the hut to create a room for storing the dirt and a trapdoor in the floor to get into it. Interest in music reached a peak during the next weeks and day after day the band practiced. In the meantime a system of watches was instituted so that every move of the Tommies was checked and the scouts were never left out of sight.

English-speaking PW's got themselves convicted to serve detention so that they would know what the guards talked about. The digging went on slowly. The clay was wet and the tunnel had to be shored as they went along. Electric lights were installed. A little trolley was built to haul out the dirt. An air-conditioning system was made from tin cans, with the bottoms out, soldered together, with vents regularly spaced. The power was supplied by a PW working a home-made bellows at the end behind the false partition.

Everything went fine, but the hardest part was yet to come. It was the custom of the Tommies to walk between the outer and inner wire (the cat walk) with long steel rods, probe them into the soil and pour water down the hole. If the hole did not fill up there must be a tunnel. When the tunnel slowly inched its way under the cat-walk the Tommies had to be watched more than ever. The warning had to reach the men in the tunnel in time to stop up the holes made by the probes.

Tension rose as the end came closer, but the system worked beautifully and the poor Tommies were completely deceived. At last it was done and the opening dug at the calculated spot under the guard room.

In the meantime, at other parts of the camp, other PW's had been busy. They had constructed forty serviceable packs which could be strapped to the back. Food was gathered, tools



The exit of the tunnel through which some 28 PW's escaped. Note the object lying in the left foreground—part of the improvised air-conditioning system.

made and every pack outfitted as completely as possible. They contained food, clothes, matches, toilet paper, drugs, first aid kits, maps, compasses, hatchets, blankets, fishing lines and hooks, etc. At last the time had come and everything was in readiness. All that remained to be done was to choose a suitable night and away they would go.

It had rained for weeks and the country presented a dismal picture. It was cold and damp and as you walked clay accumulated on your boots and kept creeping up. We had known for some time that the Heinies were up to something but could not lay our finger on it. The nights had been dark and it was decided to put an extra guard on the road outside of the guard room so that he could not be seen from the enclosure. It was Saturday night. A heavy fog had smothered the country and the nearest lights on the wire looked like little circles of candle light. There wasn't a breath of wind and the only sound was the odd snatch of music from the village

Thank You

The business manager of P.O.W. WOW is happy to report and acknowledge the following subscriptions to P.O.W. WOW:

Baird, L. M., Regina, Sask.
Barnes, J. H., Medicine Hat.
Barnett, E. T., Longbank, Sask.
Charlton, J. F., Vancouver.
Cockle, A., Edmonton, Alta.
Fogden, F. G., Nanaimo, B.C.
Gendreau, L. P., Noranda, Que.
Greer, H. S., Bowser, B.C.
Hagel, L. E., Sovereign, Sask.
Grist, F., Church House, B.C.
Hall, N. S., North Lethbridge, Alta.
Henderson, J. Toronto, Ont.
James, D., Sunbridge, Ont.
Johnston, A. W. Lloydminster, Sask.
LePargneux, H. E., Maple Creek, Sask.
Lloyd, Paul, Edmonton, Alta.
MacLeod, J., Vancouver, B.C.
McGinnis, F. P., Battleford, Sask.
McLaren, F., Red Deer, Alta.
Meaken, Walter, Plenty, Sask.
Neis, C. V., Delburne, Alta.
Pocock, F., Medicine Hat.
Soltis, S., Chip Lake, Alta.
Tupper, J. C., Meadow Lake, Sask.

juke-box. The Vet was quietly standing in his sentry box cursing the weather, thinking about home, thinking about nothing in particular. His was not a pleasant vigil; it was lonesome and damp.

As he stepped out of his box a shadow loomed against the side

of the building. The old man was back in France, back 25 years. Quicker than it can be told, the PW was covered with a rifle tickled by an itchy trigger. One false move and there would have been a dead PW with the guard looking for more. But the PW was scared to death and kept his hands up in the approved "Kamarad" style.

By this time the shouts of the guard had aroused the sleeping guard inside and they came running out the door. The PW packs were found under the guardroom neatly piled so they could be grabbed as the escapees came out of the tunnel. The PW's in the tunnel, when the alarm was raised, retreated as quickly as possible and doffed their mud-covered clothes, tried to hide them. And so, once again, the most carefully laid, and thoroughly executed plans of the Germans had backfired because of the vigilance and loyalty of the Veterans Guard of Canada.

National Fruit Co.

Makers of
**HIGH-N-DRY
GINGERALE**

"A Drink of Good Taste"

Medicine Hat, Alberta

BLAIR'S TAXI

24-Hour Service

PHONE

2727

Macdonald's Consolidated

LTD.



**WHOLESALE
GROCERS**

Medicine Hat

Compliments
of

T. EATON CO.
WESTERN LIMITED
BRANCH STORE
MEDICINE HAT CANADA

Weston's
Bread and Cakes (Canada) Limited